

# ENSURING QUALITY HEALTH SYSTEMS AND HUMAN RESOURCES

## OVERVIEW

Supporting the UNAIDS' Fast-Track Strategy to achieve the 90-90-90 targets by 2020 will require HIV treatment coverage to double globally, from 15 million to 30 million, between 2015 and 2020, and viral load (VL) testing to be scaled up dramatically. This expansion in HIV service delivery requires a health workforce authorized and equipped with the right skills and deployed in the right places to deliver high-quality care across the clinical cascade. In addition, in order to enhance services for key and priority populations, connect and retain patients in care, address loss to follow-up, manage complex cases, and utilize VL results, additional investments in the health workforce are needed. Strengthening health workforce capacity requires more than just training. It also requires improvements in health policies, workforce regulations, service delivery models, pre-service and continuing education, and clinical mentorship. Moreover, health workforce capacity is further complicated by persistent workforce shortages and financing constraints within many countries, highlighting the need for workforce planning, strategic deployment, improved retention and strategic task sharing across cadres.

## CDC'S ROLE

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of health systems and the performance of health workers to sustainably scale-up and deliver high quality HIV services. We are collaborating with national and international partners, Ministries of Health (MOH) and CDC country offices as thought leaders; identifying human resources for health (HRH) gaps; guiding systems investments; developing innovative tools; and improving policies to build capacity in health services research, policy and regulation, MOH workforce data and management systems, and quality clinical practice. Specific investments include:

- **Advancing the quality of HIV service delivery by nurses and midwives** through the African Health Professions Regional Collaborative in 18 countries and innovative clinical mentorship pilots in five programs supported by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
- **Improving the planning and distribution of health worker programs** for HIV by providing technical assistance to more than eight countries in human resource information systems; in addition, CDC is helping three countries to use a *National Health Worker Allocation Optimization Tool* to improve the efficiency of health worker deployment to high-burden HIV clinical sites and support countries implementing HRH rapid assessment tools
- **Strengthening Ministry of Health capacity to plan and manage HIV programs** by establishing key sub-national MOH capacity metrics, by supporting capacity-building activities, and by advancing National Public Health Institutes
- **Addressing policy barriers to HIV service delivery** by helping countries to develop national task-sharing policies, regulations, scopes of practice, and national public health laws
- **Advancing research** to evaluate health systems and health workforce interventions and identify best practices for sustainable HIV service delivery

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CDC's investments have proven effective in addressing health systems barriers and strengthening the health workforce in numerous countries. Some of those accomplishments include but are not limited to:

- **Task Sharing Policy Development:** Helped three countries to adopt national task-sharing policies

- **HRH Rapid Assessment Tool:** Worked on the development of an assessment tool which has gathered site-level HRH staffing data in three countries
- **Continuing Professional Development:** Established new national continuing professional development programs in seven East, Central and Southern African countries, and strengthened six countries' existing programs
- **Nurse-Initiated and -Managed Antiretroviral Therapy (ART):** Advanced nursing regulations in 17 East, Central and Southern African countries, including national scopes of practice, continuing professional development programs, nursing and midwifery legislation, and professional licensure
- **Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS):** Worked with MOH and CDC offices in eight countries on the development, implementation, integration, and evaluation of HRIS
- **Development of Global Standards:** Joined forces with the World Health Organization to develop National Health Workforce Accounts, and Minimum Data Sets for HRIS and HR Registries; created HRIS Assessment Framework and HRIS Business Case with the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator, USAID, and partners to identify implementation gaps in 12 countries
- **Workforce Planning:** Conducted analysis of HR recruitment and deployment processes in two countries. Trained an African non-governmental organization in methodology to serve as a sustainable resource in the region
- **Workforce Allocation Optimization Tool:** Developed a tool to match graduates' employment preferences with demand for workers at specific locations. This development has been piloted at the national level in one country, reducing reallocation requests
- **Capacity and Sustainability Metrics:** Supported three countries in developing a tool to measure the sub-national capacity to manage the HIV epidemic
- **Field Epidemiology Training Program:** Supporting advanced training in HIV epidemiology, surveillance, and laboratory to professionals in Mozambique, DRC, and Zimbabwe. Graduates from this program serve in senior leadership roles at the national and sub national levels to support the HIV response in their respective countries.

## FUTURE EFFORTS

The health workforce is a critical factor in meeting the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets. As countries strive to end the HIV epidemic, future investments will be needed to create and formalize new cadres and to facilitate uptake of innovative service delivery models among pre-existing cadres. Formulation and implementation of task sharing policies is also a key activity to continue in order to continue to expand the capacity of the workforce to support HIV service delivery. In order to develop a workforce properly equipped to address the epidemic amongst key populations, CDC will focus on research and adoption of best practices among providers in this key area.

## BENEFITS OF OUR WORK

Fighting disease abroad is the first step to preventing disease at home. Advancements in global health systems and health workforce development contribute to the health of people living in low- and middle-income countries, as well as the American public. CDC supports the sustainable development of countries' national capacity to ensure an adequate health workforce to address infectious diseases, such as HIV, TB, and new and emerging threats.